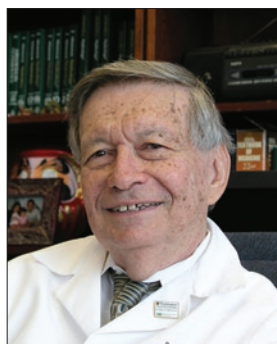


# Dr. Saulo Klahr, 1935–2010

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Dr. Saulo Klahr,  
1935–2010

There will never be another Saulo Klahr. The nephrology community lost a great leader on 3 June 2010 when Dr. Saulo Klahr passed away at Parc Providence in St. Louis, Missouri, with his family close by him after a long illness. Saulo is survived by his wife, Carol, and his sons, James and Robert.

Saulo was born in Santander, Colombia, and received his medical degree from the National University of Colombia at Bogotá in 1961. He accepted a renal fellowship at Washington University Medical School that same year. In 1972 he became the director of the Renal Division, a position he held for 20 years. In only ten years, Saulo advanced his career from fellow to professor of medicine. In 1986, Saulo was named the Joseph Friedman Professor of Medicine in Renal Diseases, and in 1991 he became the John E. and Adaline Simon Chair of Medicine at Jewish Hospital in St. Louis.

It would take me many pages to recount all of Saulo's accomplishments and achievements. He had more than 500 scholarly articles published. He was the editor or coeditor of more than 20 books, and he served as an officer of practically every national or international society connected to nephrology.

For the past 45 years he had an active role at the National Institutes of Health, first as a member of the Advisory Committee for the Artificial Kidney–Chronic Uremia Program, then as a member and chairman of General Medicine B and chairman of the Clinical Study on the Effect of Dietary Modification on the Course of Progressive Renal Disease.

Saulo played an active role in the National Kidney Foundation of Eastern Missouri and Metro East, and an annual lectureship was established in his honor in 1990. He also played a critical role in the development of the American Society of Nephrology, and in 1985 he became its president. He held numerous positions in the International Society of Nephrology and, since 1997, was a member of the Executive Committee. He was also an associate editor of the *Journal of Clinical Investigation* and the editor of the *American Journal of Kidney Diseases* and of *Kidney International* for many years.

Many awards were given to Saulo for his contributions to science and medicine—just to mention a few: Outstanding Investigator of the American Heart Association, the Presidential Medal of the American Society of Nephrology, Lifetime Member Award of the National Kidney Foundation of Eastern Missouri and Metro East, and the prestigious John P. Peters Award of the American Society of Nephrology.

I would like now to pause and outline the difference between Saulo and many other investigators.

Why was Saulo so successful? Obviously this is a very difficult question, and there are no simple answers. However, here are a few clues that may help us understand Saulo's accomplishments.

Saulo was incredibly bright, he had a photographic memory, he was a compulsive worker, he was always prepared, he was meticulous, and he covered every possibility. Saulo did not believe in short cuts. On the contrary, he studied complicated problems in great detail until he found the correct answers.

When Saulo became the director of the Renal Division, he understood that to run a division requires a full commitment and dedication. He understood that his loyalty was not only to his personal friends, but to all members of the division. He worked very hard to make the Renal Division a comfortable place for all young investigators. He read all papers before publication but strongly encouraged and supported young investigators to become independent and start their own research careers.

In the past 40 years, many of his collaborators have become senior members of the Division and have become internationally known for their work. Many of them hold prestigious positions at other universities. However, it was the outstanding environment provided by Saulo that prevented the exodus of such qualified people from our division. Saulo always gave credit to those who deserved it. In addition to his outstanding academic contributions, Saulo's other legacy is the numerous nephrologists trained in the Renal Division, who have achieved major roles in nephrology worldwide.

Saulo's work on the adaptation of nephrons in chronic renal failure, renal metabolism, renal

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gluconeogenesis, eicosanoids, sodium transport, ammonia metabolism, obstructed nephropathy, angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors, and renal fibrosis and polycystic kidney disease represents just a few examples of his research contributions in his hundreds of publications. The chapter on obstructive nephropathy that he coauthored with Dr. Neal Bricker and published in the second edition of *Strauss and Welt's Diseases of the Kidney* (1971) is a classic in nephrology. Saulo traveled to virtually every country in Latin America, where he gave hundreds of lectures on the pathophysiology of chronic renal failure. Many of these lectures were based on the 'intact nephron hypothesis,' developed by our first director of the Renal Division, Dr. Bricker, and published in the *American Journal of Medicine* in 1960.

The majority of nephrologists in St. Louis have been, in one way or another, closely associated with the program directed by Dr. Saulo Klahr. He made the Renal Division one of the highest-ranking divisions in the country, where cutting-edge science was performed, and a place where future nephrologists wanted to come to train.

I had the privilege of working with Saulo since 1963. I probably knew him better than anybody else did all of these years in the Renal Division.

I never felt that Saulo was my chief, but rather my friend, my very close friend. I always felt that we shared the good and the bad moments of our lives. We did not always agree on every single point, but in the end we understood each other and always arrived at a logical decision.

Saulo's life was blessed by a young nurse working in our metabolic unit. Saulo and Carol De Clue met at the hospital, fell in love, and married in 1965. Carol was not only an outstanding wife but also a loyal friend. She worked with Saulo side by side helping him and supporting him during his entire career and then tirelessly caring for him in the last years of his life. They have two wonderful sons, James and Robert. I have seen them grow up into fine young men, and I know that Saulo was extremely proud of both of them. Both are lawyers. James married Frances Hayes, and they have two boys, Ryan and Aaron. Robert married Beth Gasparovic, and they have two girls, Emma and Mimi. Saulo was truly blessed!

As I said at the beginning, there will never be another Saulo Klahr.

Saulo, I miss you! Until we meet again...

#### DISCLOSURE

The author declared no competing interests.